

# BC Coaches Week – Feature Coach

## Blake Dalton – Provincial Coach



**If you could be any colour in the Crayola box which one would you pick and why?** Blue. It's the colour of water (well, clean water) and the sky. Both these are integral to our sport. Is there anything better than a beautiful, sunny day on the water? I think not!

**How long have you been coaching? And coaching at the current club?** I have been coaching for 17 years. This is my first year at CKBC.

**Why did you decide to be a coach?** I was first hooked when one of my crews won gold at the Canada Day Regatta in Regina. It was infinitely better than any victory I had as an athlete! I wanted more.

I also loved taking an active role in an athlete's development – both on and off the water.

Driving the coach boat was/is pretty fun, too. There's nothing better than feeling the wind blow through your hair. Oh wait.

**What, if any, professional development plans are in your future?** I plan on attending the Coaching Conference in Ottawa in November. I'd also like to enroll in the Advanced Coaching Diploma Program next fall.

Beyond that, I love to continue to participate in other coaches' practices. I can always learn something – whether it's in relation to communication skills, creating a positive learning environment or developing/maintaining a strong coach-athlete relationship.

**What is your proudest coaching moment to date?** I beam with pride about the successes of my athletes at the national and international level, but I'd say hearing about former athletes being successful after their paddling careers – either academically or professionally. Sport is an incredibly powerful and empowering tool!

**Who is your 'idol' coach?** I feel incredibly fortunate to have been around several phenomenal coaches and it would be impossible to narrow it down to one. Three really stand out: Jason Rusu, Kenna Robins and Marc Creamer.

Jason taught me the traits necessary to succeed in sport and life (at least I think). I was of the belief at a young age that the good life included watching TV and eating Pizza Pops (I was a simple person). I was firm on this. Yet he had the ability to convince me to dream big, work hard and be courteous to my fellow teammates, competitors, coaches and officials. This is something I try to instill now with my athletes.

I admire Kenna's organization, knowledge and commitment to her athletes. I also appreciate that when she can't answer a question, she'll admit it and go look it up or at least kindly guide you in the right direction.

Finally, Marc, well, his knowledge, passion and enthusiasm is unparalleled to any other coach.

He's a dreamer, a doer and always puts the needs of his athletes first – if it means waking up at 4 am, polishing boats in absurd conditions or do things that make him feel uncomfortable, he'll do it. Beyond that, he's a walking encyclopedia of our sport. Never bet against him in canoe trivia (or trivia in general). Trust me, I've lost a lot of money! Finally, his trailer skills are ridiculous. I'm certain he was a trucker (that listened to endless audio books) in a previous life.

**How important is winning?** It depends on which developmental stage the athlete is in. At a young developmental age, winning is overrated. Physical literacy and acquiring fundamental movement skills should be paramount. At a later stage, winning becomes important. That said, the process to get to the point of crossing the line first is just as significant, if not more. You can learn a great deal from defeat and setbacks.

**If you could be a super hero for 24 hours; which one would you be and why?**

My father. To me super heroes are real people. They're exemplary citizens. My father is that. He's intelligent, humble, generous and willing to take risks. These are qualities that I admire and wish I – and (many) others – could have.

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